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AUTHOR Galbraith, Michael W.

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ABSTRACT

A framework for conceptualizing community-based education and lifelong learning is presented and examined. The connection between community-based education and lifelong learning is made, as well as recommendations for research that require attention if this connection is to become a reality. The paper begins by defining community, community-based education, and lifelong learning and education. Lifelong learning is examined in terms of dimensions and psychological aspects. The connection between community-based educational and lifelong learning is then made, differentiating among formal, nonformal, and informal community-based education. A research question which needs to be asked concerns whether or not the opportunity of lifelong learning through community-based education is recognized by community-based providers and the community residents themselves. It is asserted that it is essential to investigate the realities of communities--what is actually going on or not going on to enhance lifelong learning. Fourteen specific research questions concerned with determining the community's status in lifelong learning are presented. Additional recommended research themes are the use of technology in community-based education and lifelong learning and education through mentoring. Finally, the role of the research agency is described. One figure illustrates the relationship between community-based education and lifelong learning. (Contains 31 references.) (MAS)

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COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND THE DELIVERY OF LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Dr. Michael W. Galbraith
Professor of Adult Education
Florida Atlantic University
Department of Educational Leadership
777 Glades Road
Boca Raton, FL 33431

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COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND THE DELIVERY OF LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Introduction

The future of our urban and rural communities will depend on an educated citizenry. Community-based organizations can provide a mechanism for opportunity to engage in lifelong learning, if properly cultivated. In this paper I examine and present a framework for conceptualizing community-based education and lifelong learning. The connection between community-based education and lifelong learning is made as well as recommendations for research that require attention if this connection is to become a reality. The role of the research agency is also described.

Conceptualizing Community and Community-Based Education

Every individual is a member of some kind of community and each, whether deliberately or unintentionally, participate in some aspect of learning provided within their social milieu. Communities are diverse entities. It is through this diversity that adult learners find educational opportunities to engage in purposeful learning. Community-based education providers are the mechanism for the engagement of such learning. However, to understand what is community and community-based education and their relationship, an examination of the concepts is warranted.

The Concept of Community

The word "community" comes from the Latin term, **Communis**,

meaning fellowship or common relations and feelings. Community is a value-laden term that evokes a variety of descriptions by a diverse range of individuals (Bellah, et al., 1985; Effrat, 1974, Galbraith, 1990a; 1992a, Luloff & Swanson, 1990; Moore & Feldt, 1993; Warren & Lyon, 1988). The concept of community is multidimensional in scope and perspective and generates a host of definitions, missions, aims, and images. Galbraith (1990a, p. 8) suggests that individuals in the United States live in a mega-community that is international, national, and local in scope and defines mega-community as a "large scale systematic community that is connected by cultural, social, psychological, economic, political, environmental, and technological elements."

Tonnies (1957) used the terms **gemeinschaft** and **gesellschaft** to describe two ways of how people relate to each other. A **gemeinschaft** community is characteristic of families, neighborhoods, and friendship groups that relate to each other in a sense of mutuality, stability, common identity and concerns, and a common subscription to social norms, bonds, and obligations. A **gesellschaft** community is one in which people relate to each other in a means-ends relationship. It is characterized by various forms of exchange with other people for the primary purpose of serving individual interests. There is little sentiment involved and the rationality within such a community is high in that shared identity, mutuality, and a common concern is absent. Between the two conceptual types of communities, it would suggest that a community that is

characterized by **gemeinschaft** seems most appropriate to bring about a democratic and harmonious process for engaging in lifelong learning opportunities.

Defining Community

Warren (1978, p. 1) suggests the idea of community is deceptively simple, "so long as one does not ask for a rigid definition." He found through a meta-analysis of some ninety-four definitions of community that sixty-nine such definitions included social interaction, common ties, and locational criteria as definitive of the concept. The emphasis on human interaction and relationships within places, commonalities in interests, values, and mores are frequently cited attributes of community. Warren ultimately defined community to be "that combination of social units and systems which perform the major social functions having locality relevance" (p. 9). In an earlier publication, Warren (1970) coined the phrase "the good community" in which a community is concerned with primary group relationships, autonomy, viability, power distribution, participation, commitment, heterogeneity, neighborhood control, and the extent of conflict exhibited. A good community is people-oriented, controlled, and democratic in nature. It is concerned with the capacity of local people to confront their problems through concerted actions, directing themselves to the distribution of power, arranging for participation and commitment in community affairs, understanding how differences among people can be tolerated, and debating the extent of neighborhood control and

conflict. Fellin (1987) echoes similar characteristics of a good community by describing a community as a group in which membership is valued as an end in its self. Kanter (1972) contends that the search for the good community is a quest for direction and purpose in the collective anchoring of the individual life.

The above definitional perspective is considered geographic and locational. However, others suggest that the emphasis should focus on the commonalities of interests, concerns, and functions of people (Bellah, et al., 1985; Brookfield, 1983; Galbraith, 1990b, 1992b; Hamilton & Cunningham, 1989; Hiemstra, 1993; Roberts, 1979). There are "communities of interest" and "communities of function" that may supersede the familiar locational expression of community. Communities of interest are those groups of individuals bound by some single common interest or set of common interests such as leisure interests, civic and special political interests, or spiritual and religious beliefs and affiliations. Being a "baseball or college basketball enthusiast" or perhaps an "opera lover" are examples of communities of interest. Groups identified by the function of major life roles such as professor, social worker, consultant, attorney, doctor, farmer, homemaker, parent, and so forth would be considered communities of function. Geographic communities, communities of interest, and communities of function intersect and overlap into the broad conceptualization of community.

Another way of defining community is derived from the field

of educational marketing in which demographic and psychographic communities exist. Demographic communities are those groups bound by common demographic characteristics such as race, gender, sex, and age. For example, to speak of the "African American community" or the "elderly community" is to address a demographic community. Psychographic communities are those formed by commonality of value systems, social class, and life style such as the "gay community" or the "rural middle class farm" community.

There are diverse ways of defining "community" as evidenced by the above. To define community strictly as geographical or locational would hamper the richness of its meaning and purpose. Accepting the diversity of such perspectives, Galbraith (1990a) suggested that community may be defined as "the combination and interrelationships of geographic, locational, and non-locational units, systems, and characteristics that provide relevance and growth to individuals, groups, and organizations (p. 5).

Defining Community-Based Education

Community-based education could be defined as an educational process by which individuals (in this case adults) become more competent in their skills, attitudes, and concepts in an effort to live in and gain more control over local aspects of their communities through democratic participation. Hamilton and Cunningham (1989, p. 439) suggest that "Community-based education operates on the assumption that a given community, whether urban or rural, has the potential to solve many of its own problems by

relying on its own resources and by mobilizing community action for problem resolution." They continue by indicating that the aims and purposes of community-based education usually are directly related to specific community issues such as career training, consumerism, environmental concerns, basic education, ethnic history and culture, governmental policies, and civic and political education. In addition, Kerensky (1981) emphasizes the necessity of learning new skills and knowledge about existing social problems. Learning is the dominant factor and as a result propels community-based education activities toward definite educational outcomes.

Compton and McClusky (1980) did not use the term "community-based education" but instead used the phrase "community education for development" and defined it as "a process whereby community members come to identify their problems and needs, seek solutions among themselves, mobilize the necessary resources, and execute a plan of action or learning or both. This educative approach is one in which community is seen as both agent and objective, education is the process, and leaders are the facilitators, in inducing change for the better" (p. 229). From this perspective it could be suggested that community-based education's primary purpose is to meet the unique needs of the community it serves, as a whole and individually. In addition, community-based education generates and utilizes available resources and skills, as well as those untapped skills and resources, to meet the varied needs of the community and

those of its residents.

Community-Based Education as Process and Program

Community-based education as a process would focus on the social relationships that develop as a result of interactions. It may be considered a "grounds-up" process since it begins with interactions with two or more community residents and then progressively expands to include many others within the community. Within this process, individuals come together become of common concerns, desires, and interests to participate in learning and decision-making. Hamilton and Cunningham (1989, p. 441) suggest that "In this process, residents learn more about the issues and make maximum use of local resources to solve problems, and they identify and control external sources of assistance." They continue by stating that "The primary emphasis .... is the psychosocial effect it has on the community residents as they expand social relationships for learning" (p. 441). The essence of community-based education as a process is the awareness of how social relationships assist in the development of interactions that spring forth common concerns related to learning, social, political, environmental, economic, and other factors.

Community-based education as a program is the organized activities that develop for the purpose of attaining a specific benefit. Objectives and procedures are recognized and the maintenance of the program follows some set of policies and procedures. If certain programs are highly specialized, subject-

matter professionals may be employed to assist in there development and operation. Hamilton and Cunningham (1989, p. 441) warns that "The emphasis on activities can sometimes overshadow participation of community residents in the decision-making process." Community-based education as a process or a program must retain its foundational belief that active participation of community citizens is paramount and that to accomplish this certain conditions of participation must be present: 1) freedom to participate; 2) ability to participate; and 3) willingness to participate (Cary, 1970).

Principles of Community-Based Education

Hiemstra (1993, p. 23) suggested that an educative community is "A community which is seen to be or is used as a learning laboratory in some manner. It is....associated with the notion of activation and facilitation of learning by an educational agent where some community resources, part, or agency is used to supplement the educational experience." He continues by stating that "A philosophy that accompanies the community education process is that learning is a continuous, lifelong experience and need" (p. 37). Several principles support this lifelong process as it relates to community-based education as putforth by various writers such as Anderson and Jeffrey (1992), Galbraith (1990b, 1992b), Hiemstra (1993), Kerensky (1989) and others:

Self-Determination. All community members have a right and responsibility to be involved in determining community needs and identifying community resources that can be

used to address those needs.

Self-Help. Community members are best served when their capacity to help themselves is encouraged and developed. They become part of solution and build independence rather dependence when they assume responsibility for their own well-being.

Leadership Development. Local leaders must be trained in such skills as problem-solving, decision-making, and group process as a means of sustaining ongoing self-help and community improvement efforts.

Localization. The greatest potential for high level public participation occurs when services, programs, and community involvement opportunities are close to where people live.

Integrated Delivery of Services. Interagency cooperation among organizations and agencies that operate for the public good can meet their own goals and better serve the public by collaborating with other organizations and agencies that are working toward common goals.

Reduce Duplication of Services. Communities should utilize to the fullest the physical, financial, and human resources within their locality and coordinate their efforts without duplication of services.

Accept Diversity. The segregation or isolation of people by age, income, social class, sex, race, ethnicity, religion, or handicapping condition inhibits the full

development of the community. Inclusion of the broadest possible cross section of community residents is warranted in the development, planning, and implementation of community programs, services, and activities.

Institutional Responsiveness. Serving the continuously changing needs of the public is an obligation of public institutions since they exist to serve the public.

Lifelong Learning. Formal and informal learning opportunities should be available to community members of all ages in a wide variety of community settings.

Principles associated with community-based education are grounded in the notion that each and every community member has a right to be involved in the identification and resolution of individual and community needs through a democratic participatory process. The total community, including all public organizations and agencies, is positioned to serve as the vehicle for bring about change and meeting identified needs.

Conceptualizing Lifelong Learning and Education

In this section the concept of lifelong learning and education will be examined as well as the various dimensions and psychosocial aspects of lifelong education.

Defining Lifelong Learning and Education

Lifelong learning and lifelong education have become popular slogans within the lexicon of American language. The two phrases have been used interchangeably within the literature as well as

synonymously to mean and promote adult, continuing, and community-based education. The very nature of the words suggests that lifelong learning and lifelong education do not take place only in adulthood but throughout life from birth to death. To conceptualize and understand lifelong learning and education, definitional distinctions must be made and in doing so an examination of words such as life, lifelong, learning, and education is warranted.

According to Galbraith (1992b, p. 3), "The word **life** conjures up definitions that range from political, religious, sociological, historical, anthropological, and psychological perspectives. Understanding life involves determining how society measures it and views it in relationship to these various perspectives. Life is composed of the growth and development of the human being that takes place from birth to death." **Lifelong** denotes this timespan.

Differentiating between **learning** and **education** also creates operational and definitional dilemmas as is evidenced by the frequency with which writers use the terms interchangeably. It is suggested by Apps (1985) that "Learning is defined as those internal changes that occur in our consciousness" (p. 4). When one accepts the tenets of **lifelong**, the definition of **learning** can be broadened to mean a process of transforming experience into knowledge, skills, and attitudes through a variety of processes. This definition recognizes the experiential nature of learning through different processes. **Education** therefore can be

defined as those processes, events, activities, and conditions that assist and encourage learning. Education from this perspective can be described as deliberate (planned) or unintentional (random).

Deliberate education is that which is provided by schools such as elementary and secondary, college and university, proprietary schools, university extension, and community education. It is also provided by nonschool organizations such as private industry, professional organizations, trade unions, military services, community organizations, churches, and other community-based educational agencies. A third source of deliberate education is by oneself through various forms of individual and self-directed study. Unintentional education is provided from everyday work experiences; from friends and contact with family and home experiences; from the mass media, such as television, movies, and radio; and from everyday contact with the environment through recreation and entertainment, travel, and community activities.

Lifelong learning means then those changes in consciousness that take place throughout the life span which result in an active and progressive process to comprehend the intellectual, societal, and personal changes that confront each individual human being. Lifelong learning suggests life span learning and the transformation process that takes place from birth to death. **Lifelong education** can be defined as a process of deliberate and unintentional opportunities that influence learning throughout

the life span. Dave (1976) states that lifelong education "seeks to view education in its totality. It covers formal, nonformal, and informal patterns of education, and attempts to integrate and articulate all structures and stages of education..."(p. 35..."it is a process of accomplishing personal, social, and professional development throughout the life span of individuals in order to enhance the quality of life of both individuals and their collectives" (p. 35). From this definition, lifelong education is incorporated into every aspect of society through the multitude of institutions and individuals within that society. It is deeply rooted in the social circumstances which determine the motives of human action (Wain, 1987).

Dimensions of Lifelong Education

Cropley and Dave (1978) suggest that lifelong education has two dimensions: vertical integration and horizontal integration. Galbraith (1992a) suggests a third category, learning to learn, as an important dimension of lifelong education as well.

Vertical integration stresses the notion that schooling and education are not synonymous processes and that learning itself is a continuous process throughout life (birth to death). This dimension does not reject the concept of formal schooling but it does affirm that most "rapidly and enduring changes during the process of personal development take place prior to the commencement of formal schooling [and that] the longest period of life by far is the one that commences after schooling end" (p. 34). Galbraith (1992a, p. 6) comments that "education is

[therefore] a major component of life and the strongest educational influences come from outside the formal school setting through the media, relationships with peers and family, the community, workplaces, and so on." Education is for all age levels and the ability to learn and grow is cumulative over a lifetime through the integration of various processes.

The horizontal dimension stresses the notion that education and life are linked. It views education as life-wide whereby school learning is coordinated with other components in the society in which learning occurs. The horizontal dimension suggests that a very wide range of the members in society should be involved in education and that knowledge itself should be seen as a broad integrated network. Education must be viewed as continuous throughout the life span and on a continuum that accepts the integration of school and life and the various educational components that influence life.

The third dimension of lifelong education is **learning to learn**. Galbraith (1992a, p. 6) states that "A prerequisite to any educated community or society is that its people acquire the skill to learn how to learn. This dimension suggests that the educated person learns how to adapt and change, either out of self-motivation to be more efficient or out of sheer necessity from societal and personal influences and changes." Smith (1982, p. 19) writes that learning how to learn "involves possessing, or acquiring, the knowledge and skill to learn effectively in whatever learning situation one encounters." This suggests that

learners acquire the ability to identify their own learning needs, formulate learning objectives, locate and identify appropriate resources and strategies to accomplish objectives, carry out the planned learning, and evaluate learning outcomes. These abilities are paramount for all learners and an essential component of lifelong education. The dimension of learning to learn suggests that all learners begin to question the habitual givens about their thoughts, values, attitudes, and knowledge and become critically reflective thinkers. Through this dimension lifelong education truly becomes vertically and horizontally integrated.

Psychosocial Aspects

Lifelong education does not take place in a vacuum but involves human beings and the society in which they live. It lifelong education is to be a reality, profound implications of a psychological as well as a social nature must be considered. Lifelong education is education for a changing world. Psychologically, individuals of all ages must extend their cognitive, affective, and motivation domains to cope with the changing intellectual demands of a society. The ability to understand the social and technological aspects of their culture as well as the ability to understand themselves is vital. Lifelong education should facilitate healthy personal and emotional growth as well as a sense of independence. Learning to learn relates to this psychological aspect in that it begins to equip learners with the ability and skill of how, what, why,

when, and where to learn. Galbraith (1992a, p. 7) suggests that "Lifelong education premises its process on the ability to understand and adapt to the psychological needs of individuals who are at different stages of their development."

Jarvis (1987) states that individuals grow and mature within the context of social living, thus becoming to some degree a reflection of the social situation. Within the social context, individuals endeavor to understand the personal, social, and intellectual aspects of their world. They begin to change as a result of their experiences. However, the social milieu is also continuously changing and this change is the norm rather than the exception. Consequently, educational structures are the recipients of the pressures for change as well as the initiators. Within this scheme, individuals also exert their will and become an agent for change. In doing this they become an active and progressive component in the learning process.

The psychosocial aspects mesh within the vertical and horizontal dimensions of lifelong education. It is recognized that lifelong education must be flexible enough to accommodate individual options and social differences. By incorporating all the dimensions and aspects of lifelong education into a conceptual framework, education and learning can begin to be viewed in its totality and take its place within the community of formal processes (education within any formal bureaucratic organization such as the school or university); within nonformal processes (education outside the framework of the formal system

that provides selected types of learning through YMCAs, libraries, museums, and so forth); and within informal processes (education obtained through the interaction of people by means of the workplace, friends, family, and so on).

Community-Based Education and Lifelong Learning

The concepts of community-based education and lifelong learning, when merged, utilizes formal, nonformal, and informal educational processes. Through this merger, it has the potential to impact individuals, groups, and communities in the way they live, inform, and educate themselves. It can serve as a mechanism for self-fulfillment as well as for social, political, and psychological empowerment. When community-based education and lifelong learning is connected both conceptually and in practice, a unique relationship is developed that gives individuals and communities a sense of hope and dignity, a sense of responsibility for their own communities and lives, and a sense of voice within the social and political arenas. The connection suggests an inclusionary and liberating significance for individuals, groups, and communities.

Figure 1 depicts a framework for connecting lifelong education and community. It begins with the assumption that lifelong education exists and that it is available across the life span, from birth to death. Lifelong educational opportunities exist in each community in three distinct educational forms: formal, nonformal, and informal. Each process is a valid means of assisting lifelong learners in acquiring and

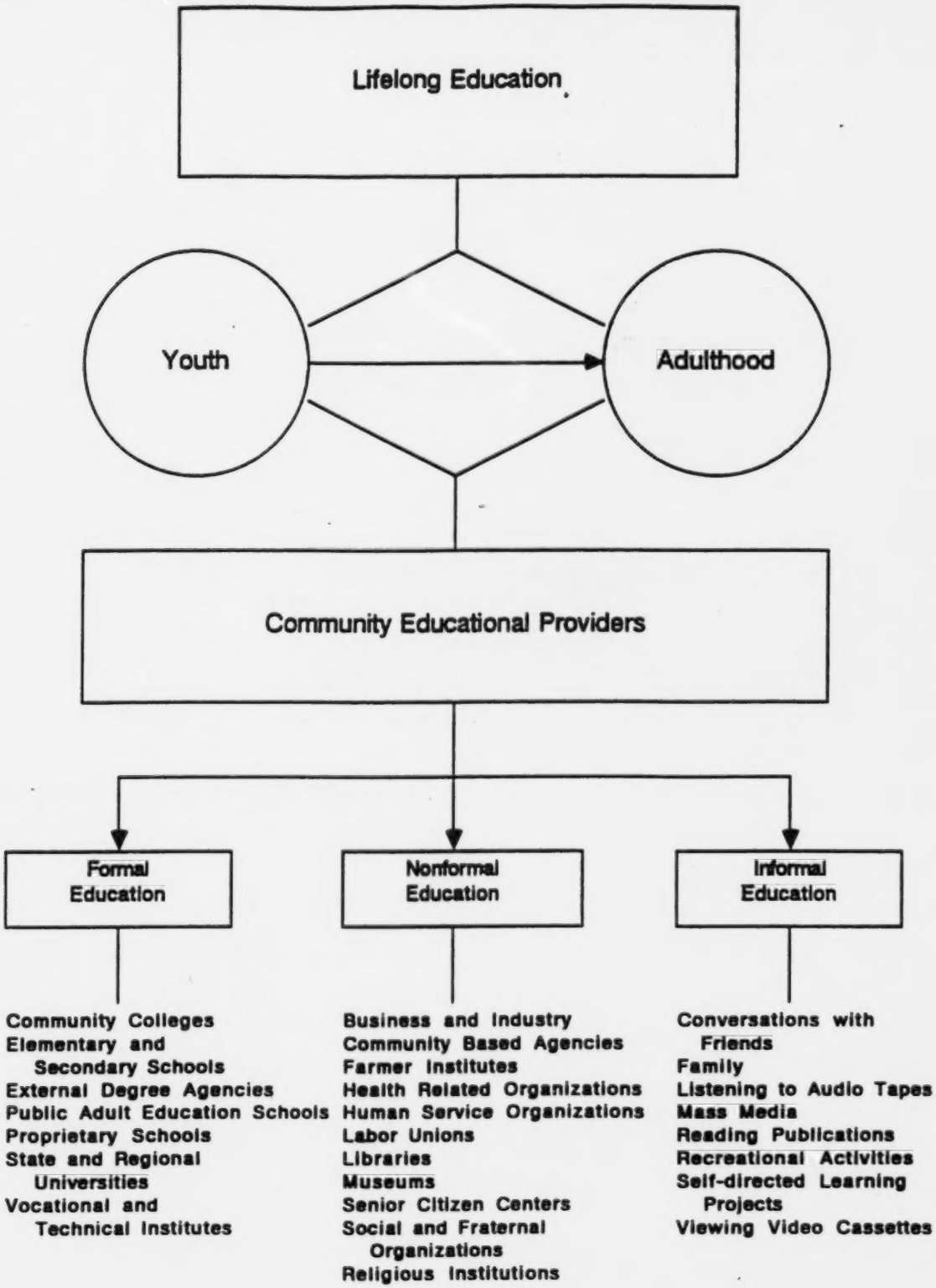

Figure 1. -- Framework for connecting lifelong education and community

meeting their educational needs. It suggests that lifelong learners can make choices in fulfilling their educational concerns and desires in a multitude of ways.

Formal Community-Based Education

This category consists of for-profit and nonprofit bureaucratic organizations within the community who have as their primary function the delivery of formal education in which youth and adult learners may participate. The goal of the organization is to provide some type of credential such as a diploma, certificate or degree. Because of the nature of the settings, instructors or teachers are professional educators who hold expertise in the area of specialization. Learners in formal community-based education settings have little control over what is taught and how it is taught. Educators make value and prescriptive judgments of what is appropriate for learners to acquire within their educational pursuits.

Nonformal Community-Based Education

A number of organizations and agencies can be viewed as nonformal community-based education providers, although education is a secondary or allied function to their primary mission or purpose. The YMCA or YWCA, cooperative extension, religious institutions, health institutions, service clubs, voluntary organizations, business and industry human resource development programs, correctional institutions, libraries, museums, senior citizen organizations, and a plethora of other community-based agencies are examples of such nonformal community-based

educational providers. In these settings learners are more likely to participate voluntarily and are not seeking any type of credential or degrees but may receive in some cases a certificate of completion. Learners retain some control over what they want to learn as well as when, how, and where the learning takes place. The nonformal settings range from nonstructured to structured. The instructors may or may not be professionally trained but overall seem to be quite successful in helping learners reach their educational goals.

Informal Community-Based Education

This category encompasses the vast majority of education that takes place for adult learners within community structures. Informal community-based education is independent of institutional and organizational providership. The community itself is the instrument of education and learners are guided by their own desires and learning processes. Learning within this context may be deliberate or fortuitous, but is always personally meaningful to the learner. Informal community-based education is characterized by interaction between human and material resources. The learner is in complete control over how, what, and where the learning will occur. Although the learner may consult with others concerning a their inquiry, in most cases a professionally trained educator is absent. The community serves as the educator as well as the learning resource and laboratory.

Research Recommendations

Community-based educational providers such as libraries,

religious institutions, senior citizen centers, museums, social and fraternal organizations, business and industry, farmer institutes, community colleges, state and regional universities, vocational and technical institutions, health related organizations, the mass media, to name a few, are positioned to assist in the design and development of community-based lifelong learning communities and the provision of continuous learning opportunities. The unanswered question is whether or not such opportunity is recognized by community-based providers and the community residents themselves? It seems essential to investigate the "realities" of communities; that is what is actually going on or not going on to enhance lifelong learning.

Community-Based Education and Lifelong Learning Questions

Several research agendas may be grounded in quantitative and qualitative studies and address such questions as:

1. How do communities view their learning opportunities beyond the notion of school?
2. What does a lifelong learning community-based education community look like?
3. What is it that community residents desire if given options and selections?
4. What are the enhancers and barriers to the development of lifelong learning communities? The enhancers and barriers to participation of community residents?
5. Are community members getting their learning needs met through nontraditional means? If so, what means are they using?
6. What community coordination and cooperation is needed to enhance lifelong learning?
7. What training and education is needed for community leaders to understand the economic, social, political, and personal benefits of investing in lifelong learning opportunities?
8. What do communities need to do to revitalize the "community spirit" and believe in the concept and practice of lifelong learning and education?
9. What training is needed for future educators (professional or life) to promote and work with lifelong learning programs

and agendas?

10. What will it mean for the community to increase the number of adults engaging in lifelong learning?
11. What role should each individual community-based provider play in the development of a lifelong learning community?
12. What should the role of policy-makers and funding sources be in the development and maintenance of a lifelong learning agenda?
13. How could technology enhance the development and delivery of lifelong learning opportunities?
14. What role should mentoring have in the development and growth of lifelong learners?

An extensive plan for action is required to address these research questions. It will mean the development of new perspectives concerning community and its connection to lifelong learning. While each of the above questions are essential in bring about a better understanding of community-based lifelong learning, an understanding of the last two questions (#13 & #14) I believe have great potential in advancing the endless reality of lifelong learning opportunities that could be afforded in each community.

A major focus, I believe connected to the development of community-based education and lifelong learning, will be the use of technology. The uses and applications of new technologies to improve program effectiveness and learning is imperative for a futuristic perspective to emerge in the advancement and enhancement of lifelong learning opportunities. However, it does raise many questions such as: How will program delivery be different? How will learning be facilitated more effectively through diverse technologies? What do we know about how adults learn through technology? How can we reduce the "phobias" attached to the use of technology? What will technology-user

communities look like? What are the social, financial, political, economic, psychological, culturally and so forth realities of engaging in technology to bring about lifelong learning communities?

To provide urban and rural communities with endless learning opportunities, technology will be a major component within each and every community. The provision of technological providership requires change and new perspectives about where, how, when, and why we engage in learning. Communities will realize the potential and power for learning that is not just localized but world-wide.

A second major component that I believe holds great potential in bringing about effective community-based lifelong learning is associated with mentoring. Mentoring is a powerful emotional and passionate interaction whereby the mentor and protege experience personal, professional, and intellectual growth and development. It is a unique one-to-one relationship that encourages learning. As long as one has some expertise in something (ie. gardening, sports, politics, specific culture, literature, and so forth) and someone else wishes to learn about it, the potential for a mentoring relationship exists. This is irrespective of the socio-economic, political, cultural, physical, age, race, gender factors associated with the individuals engaged in the mentoring relationship. The primary factor is learning and having someone help assist and guide in the journey.

Mentoring is not just giving advise to someone, but

involves relationship building, information giving, assisting in providing alternative views and options, challenging unproductive strategies, information, and behaviors, role modeling, and perhaps most importantly providing a vision about what can be (Galbraith & Cohen, in press). Every community has individuals with expertise in a multitude of things who, if connected to the right desired learner, would provide learning opportunities for those seeking such knowledge. In essence, the mentoring process allows everyone in the community to be a teacher and everyone to be a learner. While most mentoring is done face-to-face, the investigation of mentoring through technology holds a new potential for all learners who have access to a computer. It hold the possibility of serving as a mentor to potential mentees on a national and international basis or being mentored by someone far distanced from the local community in which the individual lives.

Role of the Research Agency

The federal research agency is in a position to address the above questions and fund independent researchers to conduct lifelong learning research. It would be advantageous to do so in a "community of researchers" in which the team would consist of diverse individuals from many disciplines. Since lifelong learning is not discipline specific it seems only reasonable to conduct such research from a multi-disciplinary perspective. The community of researchers may be housed out of grant-supported regional centers, under the direction of a national center, for the study of community-based education and lifelong learning. To

enhance the amount of information collected about community-based education and lifelong learning, each center would focus on specific areas of understanding. The important question is not just "what is" but "what could and should" be done to create community-based lifelong learning communities? An essential element of this research is to make it useful and practical--how do we incorporate such findings and practices into each urban and rural community.

A second major role of a research agency is to investigate the potential for the establishment of a national mentoring institute. The institute would provide training to those interested in designing, developing, and operating community-based mentoring programs. In addition, mentoring institutes could include mentoring through technological training as well. Considering the focus and purpose of lifelong learning, mentoring seems to provide perhaps the greatest opportunity to extend lifelong learning across the life span for every community member, considering the wealth of knowledge and information that each community possesses.

Conclusion

Galbraith (1990c) states that:

> Social, demographic, technological, and economic forces contribute to the changing nature of community as well as the inherent need for its members to maintain the skill and motivation to pursue a variety of learning interests throughout their lives. This requires communities of

> learners who are thoughtful and autonomous and know how to use multiple resources in the community. A learning community calls for discriminating consumers of educational services and learning opportunities. (p. 89)

Building a community of lifelong learners requires choices that are made by adult learners, community organizations, and educators of adults. An informed citizenry can assist in the development of lifelong learning communities through community-based educational providers.

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